

REMARKS

Regarding paragraph 1 of the Office Action, it makes reference to two patents which are respectively cited on line 1 of page 4 and line 17 of page 43 in the present patent application. But, the first patent 6,307,391 (which is cited on page 4) is listed as item B on form PTO-892. Similarly, the second patent 4,415,409 (which is cited on page 43) also is listed on form PTO-892 as item D. This indicates that the relevance of the '391 patent and the '409 patent, to teaching the present invention as claimed, has been considered by the Office.

Next, regarding paragraph 2 of the Office Action, it says that the drawings fail to comply with 37CFR1.84(p)(5) because items 81-85 are shown in Figs. 1, 9-11, and 14; but those items are "not mentioned in the description". However, the above position is without merit. All of the items 81-85 are described in the specification at lines 19-29 on page 15.

Next, regarding paragraphs 3-5 of the Office Action, they all indicate that "numerous pages" of the Detailed Description and "claims 2 and 6" have words with missing letters. Accordingly, the undersigned attorney made the following checks on his copy of the present patent application: 1) looked for missing letters in the words on each page of the Detailed Description, and 2) looked for missing letters in each claim. However, no missing letters were found. For example, no "e" is missing from "wherein" in line 1 of claims 2 and 6, as stated in the Office Action.

In an effort to solve the above puzzle, the undersigned attorney called Examiner Hollington and thereby

determined that the Examiner was not working from the paper copy of the present application which was originally mailed to the USPTO, but instead was working from a copy that had been optically scanned into his PC. The original paper copy of the present application that was mailed to the USPTO should contain no missing letters since it is a "Xerox" of the application which is in the file of the undersigned attorney. This indicates that a scanning error occurred in the USPTO. Accordingly, Examiner Hollington agreed to try to locate the original paper copy of the present application as mailed to the USPTO and have it re-scanned into his PC.

Next, regarding paragraphs 6-7 of the Office Action, they reject claims 1-8 and 10-12 under 35USC102(b) as being "anticipated" by Friedrich et al. (6,307,388). Here, claim 1 is the only independent claim. So if claim 1 is found to be not anticipated by patent '388, then all of claims 1-12 should be allowable.

To support the above rejection of claim 1, the Office Action attempts to correlate the language of claim 1 with various items that are in the '388 patent. This correlation occurs in the paragraph that starts on the bottom of page 3 and ends on the top of page 4. However, that correlation is in error for reasons which will now be pointed out.

In claim 1, a "chip handler means" is recited which is for "automatically moving said IC-modules into and out of said sockets, while said chip holding subassembly is at said load position". One embodiment of this chip handler means is shown in Fig. 1 as modules 50 and 60. The components in module 50 are shown in Figs. 3A-3B as items

50A-50N, and the components in module 60 are shown in Fig. 2 as items 60A-60F and in Fig. 16.

By comparison, in patent `388, the subassembly 15 does not move any IC-modules into and out of any sockets. Instead, the subassembly 15 merely squeezes the chip holding subassembly 12 between the temperature regulating subassembly 14 and the power supply subassembly 13. This is evident from in Fig. 2.

In Fig. 2, the subassemblies 13, 12, and 14 are shown spaced apart from each other. This spacing between the subassemblies 13, 12, and 14 occurs because end 15e of the arms 15b is at an "open position". When end 15e of the arms 15b is moved to the "closed position", the subassemblies 13, 12, and 14 get squeezed together.

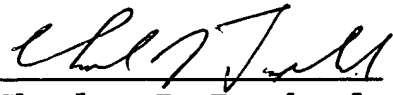
But the above movement of the arms 15b from the open position to the closed position, or visa-versa, does not move any IC-modules into or out of any sockets. Instead, movement of the arms 15b from the open position to the closed position merely 1) causes each heat-exchanger 14c in the subassembly 14 to press against a respective IC-module 12c in the subassembly 12, and 2) causes the electrical contacts 13b on each subassembly 13 to press against corresponding contacts 12d on each subassembly 12.

In order to move the IC-modules 12c into or out of the sockets 12b in Fig. 2, the entire subassembly 12 must first be manually removed from the frame 11e-11f by an operator when the arms 15b are in the open position. Then, the operator must manually take one set of IC-modules 12c out of the sockets 12b and put another set of IC-modules 12c into the sockets 12b. Then the operator must manually put the entire subassembly 12 back into the frame 11e-11f while the arms 15b are still in the open position.

A major problem with the above system of patent '388 is that while all of the arms 15b are at the "open" position, the system is not being utilized to actually test any IC-chips. By comparison, with the system of the present claim 1, this utilization problem is overcome. This is illustrated by the sequence of Fig. 7B wherein at each of time instants t9, t11, t13 and t15, three of the four chip holding subassemblies 21-24 are actually testing IC-chips and simultaneously, the IC-chips are being unloaded from/loaded into one of the four chip holding subassemblies 21-24.

Based on the above REMARKS, all grounds for rejection in the last Office Action should now be overcome. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance of all of the claims 1-14 is requested.

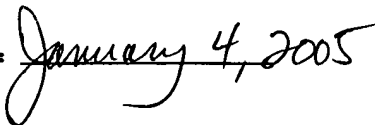
Respectfully submitted,

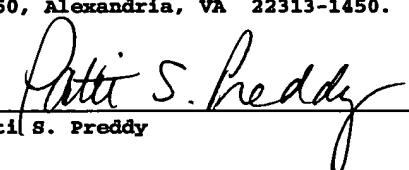
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Patti S. Preddy